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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND COMMUNITY
INNOVATION**
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY®

May 2025

Colleagues,

The question I'm asked most often at the end of the winter semester is some variation of, "Have things slowed down for you now that you are on summer break?" While the activities change, there isn't really a "slowing down" of the rhythm of work, but the end of the winter semester is uniquely marked by a significant number of celebrations that reinforce the significance of our work. This winter, we celebrated over 500 students who earned their specialist, master's and undergraduate degrees from CECI programs. For those of you who were able to join us at Commencement, you no doubt witness the unfettered joy of the students who walked across the stage, no matter if they were first, in the middle or the last to cross, the expressions of joyful accomplishment were fuel for my soul.

In the month of May, we celebrate [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#). I'm reminded that our world is a tapestry of culture and this brings to mind a celebrated Jamaican poet, Easton Lee, who wrote:

I am a grain of sand, tiny, alone, insignificant,

yet joined with others of my kind,

I make a pebble, a rock, a boulder, a beach, a desert wide and vast



I am a petal, delicate, fragile
yet joined with others just like me,
make the most beautiful of flowers to fill the earth with beauty

-Excerpted from Great is Small, Small is Great, by Easton Lee (1931-2021)

As we enter the 'summer break,' I hope you find a few moments, chunks of time
or long breaks to slow down, embrace and enjoy your place in our tapestry.

~Sherril Soman
CECI Dean

Welcome to CECI!

***Please extend a warm welcome to the newest member of
CECI faculty/staff, Cait Portko!***

Cait is brand new to GVSU and excited to be here as the new PSS for the Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)! Cait comes from a background in Early Childhood Education and did a brief stint in corporate life working for a local civil engineering firm. Cait's spare time is spent reading, doing yardwork and home improvement projects, and working with a neighborhood Mutual Aid organization. Beach trips with the family are a favorite summer activity.



CECI Unit Spotlight



Six students from Grand Valley State University's **Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM)** program within the **School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)** participated in the second annual [Hotel Turnaround Collegiate Championship](#) in New Orleans, April 14-17, 2025, at the [Asian American Hotel Owners Association \(AAHOA\)](#) annual convention (AAHOACON25).

Fourteen teams from around the country came together to battle it out at AAHOACON25 for the championship. During the competition, students had to navigate a simulation program, HOTELsim, that enabled them to make decisions mirroring real-life challenges faced by hospitality professionals. These decisions included staffing, pricing, cost control, revenue management, operations, marketing and advertising, and capital investment. Each team of students "acquired" a hotel that was financially identical in terms of performing in the same market and having the same key performance indicators. Teams used HOTELsim to implement ownership strategies to improve hotel valuation, future profit potential, and net positive cash flow. The teams who were selected for the finals were decided upon based on their financial decision making and overall operations. Once in the finals, students completed a pitch to a panel of industry experts and took questions from the panel on their performance and decision making.



GVSU HTM won two prestigious awards this year, winning both the Semi Final Championship and making it to the Collegiate Championship Finals where they finished as runners up. At the 2024 competition, GVSU HTM won the "People's Choice Award."

Above: Video from 2024's competition, where GVSU HTM won the "People's Choice Award."

Industry professionals praised the students for their knowledge and hard work while watching them compete in the competition. "The future of our industry depends on the next generation of hoteliers, and the AAHOA Collegiate Championship: Hotel Turnaround Competition is an incredible way to showcase their talent and creativity," AAHOA Chairman Kamallesh (KP) Patel said. "This competition challenges students to think like hotel owners, preparing them for the real-world decisions that drive success."

"We are thrilled to celebrate the talented and innovative winners of the 2025 AAHOA Collegiate Championship: Hotel Turnaround Competition," AAHOA President & CEO Laura Lee Blake said. "This competition continues to highlight the exceptional skills and creativity of students from top hospitality management programs as they tackle real-world challenges in hotel ownership. Watching their teamwork and problem-solving in action is truly inspiring."

Students who participated in this year's competition had many positive things to say:

"This unforgettable experience would not have been possible without the unwavering support of Grand Valley State University's Hospitality and Tourism Management Department, AAHOA, and the dedicated leadership of Professor Duane Zuber, who co-led the competition with Heidi Anaya." Bella Wylie

"This past week was a truly enriching experience where I connected classroom learning to real-world application, and I'm walking away inspired and more equipped for what's next." Eleya DeBruin

"I was nervous going into the competition, but I felt like I knew more about financial statements and how to make decisions from them than many of the other schools because of the strength of our classes here at Grand Valley." Zoe Arend

Congratulations to the students who participated in the competition this year. The HTM Department believes strongly in connecting learning in the classroom to real-world experience, and this is another phenomenal addition to our students' already strong resumes.



Updated GVSU/College/Unit Logos

University Marketing has rolled out new logos for all of GVSU, as well as updated visual identity elements, writing standards, and web/digital standards, too. All units will be receiving new logos, if they haven't received them already. To the right is an example of the update, using CECI's old and new logos.

Any existing documents, marketing materials, promotional materials, etc. that have the old logo on them **are still good to use. For any brand new materials produced or reprinting of existing materials, the new logo should be used.**



OLD LOGO

(Do **not** use on any new documents, marketing materials, promotional items, etc. moving forward.)

NEW LOGO

(To be used on new documents, marketing materials, promotional items, etc. moving forward.)

Please visit [GVSU's Identity website](#) for guidelines for proper usage and application in order to ensure the brand is consistently applied across all university materials. Please contact [Rita Cooper](#) in the Dean's Office if you have questions about your unit's logo.

Celebrations



Dr. Sal Alaimo, Professor in the **Public, Nonprofit, and Health Administration (PNHA)** program within the **School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)**, received the 2025 Student Award for Faculty Excellence at the [GVSU Student Life Awards](#) this past April. This annual award recognizes a faculty member who has made outstanding contributions to the GVSU community by supporting students and the University's mission, vision, and values. The recipient of this award inspires excellent academic achievement in the classroom, and has demonstrated experiences of connecting and supporting students beyond what is expected of them.

In early April, students from the **School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS)** Cold Case Investigation class presented to the Michigan State Police Sixth District Command on their findings of the Robert "Bobby" Joe Thompson cold case homicide from 1993. The students assisted by scanning documents and making this case digitally accessible allowing for greater search capabilities. In the week following, **Dr. Carrie Buist**, along with graduate alumni, Narelle Hickmon, '24, and current undergraduate students (Halle Bauer, Erin Peters, Kayla Walter, and Madeline DeLong) were invited to speak at the Michigan State Police Sixth District Command Conference at Embassy Suites. Dr. Buist and the students were able to discuss the cold case partnership and its positive impact on our



students and the community, highlighting the importance of theoretical and practical applications through experiential learning.



The **Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)** was awarded a **Team Achievement Award at the AP Awards Luncheon** this past April. The NOAA BWET Meaningful Watershed Environmental Education (MWEE) project was a collaborative and impactful effort between GVSU departments: **the Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP), WGVSU Broadcasting, Office of Sponsored Programs, and the Annis Water Resources Institute**. Receiving this award is a testament to the dedication, creativity, and passion of our Center for Educational Partnerships Team in CECI. From the early stages of the grant proposal to the final deliverables, each member brought their unique expertise to the table to create a lasting impact on environmental education across our region. **Vicky Wright, Assistant Director**, served as the principal investigator. She ensured this grant was carried out efficiently and with all parties involved and informed, and her organization brought all aspects of the work together cohesively. **Clay Pelon, Director**, was the primary author on the original grant application and recipient of the funding, and his partnership work with WGVSU laid the foundation for a successful collaboration with their team. **Allison Palm, Place-Based Education Specialist**, and **Mara Spears, Project Specialist**, connected directly with Kent and Ottawa educators through hands-on workshops at the Groundswell Summer Institute, turning ideas into practice in the classroom. Through strong leadership, creative media production, and hands-on educator support, the team created a comprehensive MWEE Toolkit that brings place-based environmental education to life; you can view the toolkit online at the [Groundswell Stewardship Initiative website](#). This award honors the collective effort that went into creating a resource that will continue to support educators and inspire students for years to come.

Literacy Studies faculty and students from the **Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology Department (LEFT)** were out in force representing GVSU at the Michigan Reading Association's annual conference in Grand Rapids. With support from LEFT's Special Projects Grant and funding from GVSU's Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship, the Literacy Studies team attended the conference along with 12 undergraduate and graduate students. As part of the *Mentoring into the Literacy Profession* initiative, faculty members mentored students over the past year to develop and implement their own research presentations related to literacy education. This partnership resulted in three group presentations: **Dr. Christina Ponzio, Assistant Professor**, collaborated with graduate students Briana Albert and Sara Weeks in presenting their session, *Who's at the Center? Cultivating a Critical Lens to Building and Integrating Culturally Relevant Text Sets*. **Jennifer Vanderground, Affiliate Faculty**, partnered with undergraduate students Ellie Esman and Tyler Peery to deliver their session on *Maximizing Phonics Success: Practical Strategies for Multisensory Engagement and Orthographic Mapping*. **Dr. Lindsay Stoetzel, Assistant Professor**, presented with Angela Gonzalez-Urbina and Lexi Marzolf (graduate students) and Matilyn Mumm (undergraduate student) on *Growing Together: Writing into Social Emotional Learning*.





Mei Mah, Associate Director of the **Center for Educational Partnerships (CEP)**, was honored with the **Commitment to Diversity Award** at the [GVSU AP Awards](#) in April. A deeply deserving recipient, every accomplishment highlighted by her nominators took place within or in collaboration with CEPI. Mei has long demonstrated a commitment to growing the numbers of educators of color teaching in PK-12 schools. She is a Steelcase Social Innovation Fellow through a partnership with [KConnect](#), a Kent County public-private collective impact organization. Mei assisted KConnect in securing a \$166,000 grant to continue diversifying efforts within the teacher workforce, and also has co-created a Kent County-wide educators of color collaborative for in-service/retired educators. Mei champions support for pre-service educators of color at GVSU as an advisor for the [Educators of Color Network \(ECN\)](#), and works across her unit, college, and the local community to help ECN become the strong, successful registered student organization that it is. Mei has been the principal investigator of the six year ongoing grant-funded project, [WKKF BCPS GVSU Educational Transformation Partnership](#), to support work in underserved communities in Battle Creek, MI. She has also played a key role as one of the lead staff members for the [Rep4](#) program. Her efforts to build connections with other universities, secure university-wide support from WGVU and senior leadership, and elevate the program have broadened perspectives and created new opportunities for participating students. These are just a few of her varied projects and extensive efforts, and it was clear to her entire team why she was the recipient of this year's award.

GVSU's Writing Department featured [Bellamy Creek Program's](#) students who were enrolled in WRT 130: Strategies in Writing - Stretch II as the cover story of the Winter 2025 edition of [InWriting](#), their departmental newsletter, which is written and edited entirely by students majoring or minoring in writing. Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, Ph.D., Writing Department Chair, recently praised the collaborative efforts across GVSU, noting that **Aaron Yore-VanOsterhout, Acting Director of the Bellamy Creek Program**, and **Jackie Doyon-Martin, Director of the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies (SCCJLS)**, were instrumental in bringing the program to life through their "administrative coordination and leadership." Ferdinandt Stolley concluded by saying, "GVSU's Bellamy Creek Program embodies the inclusive, transformative education we strive to offer all our students. I hope we continue to expand our offerings, and I think there is incredible potential to connect students in Grand Rapids and Allendale with the students at Bellamy Creek so they might learn together."



End of Fiscal Year Preparation for Faculty

Important Reminder for **ALL** Faculty and Staff!

As the fiscal year end grows closer and closer (June 30), please help your unit prepare by doing the following:

- [Customize your Workday notifications](#) so you don't miss important alerts and/or tasks you need to complete.
 - **Please change your settings for "Notification Type: Tasks" and "Notification Type: To-Dos" to either "Immediately" or "Daily"** so you'll be alerted when there is something in Workday that you're required to complete.
- **Please check your Expenses Hub** to see if there are any pending expense card (formerly P-card) transactions that you need to reconcile or any draft expense reports



you still need to submit or delete.

- **To find:** **Workday** > **Menu** (upper left corner) > **Personal** > **Expenses Hub**.
- **Submit final reports for any CSCE/FTLC conference grants** you received **ASAP**.
 - Your unit cannot request reimbursement until your conference expense report and grant report have been submitted and fully approved.
- **Year-Round Reminders:**
 - **GVSU expense cards** must be reconciled at the **end of every month**.
 - **Mileage** must be submitted **every 45 days** (monthly would be preferred).
 - **All employees should submit their expense reports in a timely manner** - **DO NOT** save up all of your expenses throughout a semester to submit in one expense report at the end of the semester.

EXPENSE REPORT DEADLINE: All expense reports containing expenses from **May 2025 or older** **MUST BE SUBMITTED in Workday by May 31**. June 2025 expense reports should be for new expenses incurred in June only. Please do not delay in submitting your reports! Reminder: Per university policy, expense reports for travel should be submitted within 30 days of completion of travel ([SLT 6.18](#)).

Workday Expense Report Job Aids

Publications/Presentations

The [Michigan Literacy Project \(MLP\)](#) was featured in the Spring 2025 edition of *Grand Valley Magazine*. "[Stocking the Shelves](#)" shares how MLP is helping to provide quality classroom libraries to recent Education graduates, and highlights a recent volunteer opportunity current Education students participated in where they each received 240 books to build their future classroom's library in exchange for their time and effort. Project Coordinators of the MLP are **Megan Freudigmann and Sheryl Vlietstra**, both Senior Affiliate Faculty members in the **Department of Teaching and Learning (T&L)**.

Tova Hartle, faculty with **Educational Leadership and Counseling (ELC)**, presented a roundtable session at the National Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC) conference in Safety Harbor, Florida, on April 26. The topic, *Strength in Practice: Vicarious Resilience from Schools to the Community*, examined the ways in which vicarious resilience can mitigate the impacts of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout, while helping mental health professionals find deeper meaning within their work.

Laila McCloud, Assistant Professor in **Educational Leadership and Counseling (ELC)**, was recently published in the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* [Special Issue], 62(2) for "[The future of student affairs work](#)," and also in the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* for "[Communal rest is resistance: A spiritual balm for Black faculty in academe](#)."

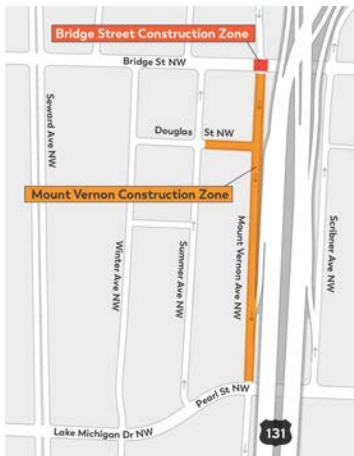
Lindsay Stoetzel, Assistant Professor in the **Literacy, Educational Foundations, and Technology Department (LEFT)**, co-authored the article, "[Video-based Reflection as a Tool for Instructional Coach Development](#)" published in the journal *Teaching and Teacher Education*.

Lorie A. Tuma, Associate Professor of **Hospitality and Tourism Management (HTM)**, within the **School of Community Leadership and Development (SCLD)**, represented GVSU at the "[Teaching with AI](#)" seminar hosted by Harvard Business School. Led by Professor Mitchell Weiss of Harvard Kennedy School, the seminar brought together faculty from numerous countries to explore how generative AI is transforming higher education. Through interactive case discussions and applied learning activities, participants examined ways to integrate AI into course design, improve student engagement, and uphold academic integrity. The seminar emphasized practical, forward-thinking approaches to preparing students for an AI-influenced future.



(Pictured above from left to right: Megan Freudigmann, Tova Hartle, Laila McCloud, Lindsay Stoetzel, Lorie A. Tuma, Sheryl Vlietstra)

Important Notices



May 2025 Road Closures

Announcing some important updates regarding the utility work for the Amway Stadium project (shared by Rockford Construction to project neighbors):

- **Road Access:**
 - Starting **May 15, Mt. Vernon between Douglas and Lake Michigan Dr. will be closed for 7 days** to begin utility relocation activities. This **closure will also include the off-ramp from 131 Southbound to Pearl St.**
 - **Summer Ave. will be closed starting May 19**, between Blumrich St. and Lake Michigan Dr.
 - Reminder that the **bike lane and west most drive lane on Mt. Vernon will then remain closed** during the duration of construction for the stadium
- **Additional Information:**
 - [Please reference this flyer](#) from Consumers Energy on their projects and forthcoming road impacts

New GVSU Faculty/Adjunct Orientation

Pew FTLC's New Faculty Orientation Dates Announced: If you have **new full-time faculty** members who are **BRAND NEW** to GVSU or are **transitioning from one role to another** at GVSU (from Visitor to Affiliate, for example), please share the dates with them for the **required** New Faculty Orientation. **Registration for orientation will open mid-June.** CECI's New Faculty Orientation dates will be shared at a later time.

- Wednesday, August 6 - 8:30 AM, Eberhard Center (Pew Campus)
- Thursday, August 7 - 8:30 AM, Mary Idema Pew Library (Allendale Campus)
- Wednesday, August 13 - 8:30 AM, Eberhard Center (Pew Campus)

New Adjunct Faculty Orientation: Orientation for brand **new adjunct faculty** will be offered completely asynchronously online and available **after August 11, 2025**. This online orientation is self-paced and will provide:

- An introduction to GVSU technology including Blackboard, Banner, and accessing your GVSU network login
- Overview of faculty supports and resources
- Getting Ready to Teach Checklist and MORE!

University Governance

[CECI University Committees](#)

[Representation Slidedeck](#)

[Representation List](#)

[Winter 2025 Election Results](#)

College Governance

[CECI Governance Committees](#)

[Governance Website](#)

[Representation List](#)

[Winter 2025 Election Results](#)



May 14 - [Groundswell Student Project Showcase](#) | 5:00 PM | DeVos Center

May 26 - Memorial Day Recess - **GVSU CLOSED**

June 16 - 1st 6 Weeks Classes End

June 17-18 - Examinations - 1st 6 Weeks

June 23 - Grades Due 1st 6 Weeks by 12:00 PM / 2nd 6 Weeks Classes Begin

June 30 - **GVSU Fiscal Year Ends**

July 4 - Independence Day Recess - **GVSU CLOSED**

August 1 - 2nd 6 and 12 Weeks Classes End

August 4-5 - Examinations - 2nd 6 and 12 Weeks

August 11 - Grades Due 2nd 6 and 12 Weeks by 12:00 PM

August 6 - [New Faculty Orientation](#) (Full-Time Faculty only) | 8:30 AM | Eberhard Center

August 7 - [New Faculty Orientation](#) (Full-Time Faculty only) | 8:30 AM | Mary Idema Pew Lib.

August 13 - [New Faculty Orientation](#) (Full-Time Faculty only) | 8:30 AM | Eberhard Center

SAVE THE DATE! August 18 - CECI Fall Kick-Off Meeting | Pew Campus **SAVE THE DATE!**

October 2 - [GV Technology Summit](#) | 12:00 PM | DCIH

CECI Happenings is an informational form that can be submitted by any faculty, staff, or student to promote an event, publication, etc. that they would like shared to CECI social media platforms and/or the newsletter.

Important Dates

WINTER PERSONNEL ACTIONS

January 8 - Winter Personnel Portfolios due to Unit Heads

February 23 - Unit Heads submit appropriate winter personnel documents to Dean

February 29 - Dean forwards winter personnel documents to CPC

March 29 - CPC submits winter personnel recommendations to Dean

April 19 - Dean submits winter personnel recommendations to Provost

June 1 - Provost makes winter personnel decisions and notifies all appropriate people

Resources

[Acronyms](#)

[CECI Connections Guide](#)

[CECI Newsletter Repository](#)

[Experts Guide](#)

[Organizational Chart](#)

[Student Flowchart](#)

Newsletter Contributions

Thanks to all those who contributed to the May 2025 edition of *CECI Connections*:

Lana Burns, Rita Cooper, Jackie Doyon-Martin, Tova Hartle, Mark Hoffman, Kristy Jack, Laila McCloud, Cait Portko, Sherril Soman, Lindsay Stoetzel, Victoria Stubbs, Lorie A. Tuma, Duane Zuber.

Submit a story for the June edition [here!](#)

You may also send items to share in future editions of CECI Connections to Victoria A. Stubbs at stubbsvi@gvsu.edu.

Questions? cecidean@gvsu.edu | [\(616\) 331-6821](tel:(616)331-6821) | gvsu.edu/ceci

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